

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 TRSE-00 /076 W
-----056171 190245Z /75

R 181115Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8120
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 00962

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, XT, XG, MT
SUBJECT: NATIONALIST PARTY VIEWS ON BASIC FOREIGN
- POLICY ISSUES

1. THE NATIONALIST (OPPOSITION) PARTY (NP) RECENTLY
ISSUED A STATEMENT ON ITS BASIC FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS
(COPY BEING POUCHED TO EUR/WE). ESSENTIALLY A REITERATION
OF ITS PREVIOUS VIEWS, THE NP REEMPHASIZED ITS DESIRE TO
LOOK TO THE WEST FOR MALTA'S SECURITY. THE STATEMENT
ALSO STRESSED THE NP'S REJECTION OF NEUTRALITY AS AN
APPROPRIATE STATUS FOR MALTA AND SUGGESTED THAT, SHOULD
THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL OF A GUARANTEE OF
NEUTRALITY BE FORMALLY EMBODIED IN A TREATY, THE
GUARANTOR NATIONS MIGHT INTERPRET SUCH A TREATY AS GIVING
THEM THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE MILITARILY IF MALTA DECIDED
UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES NOT TO REMAIN NEUTRAL. THE
DECLARATION ALSO RESTATED THE NP'S OPPOSITION TO FOREIGN
MILITARY BASES IN MALTA AND TO MALTESE MEMBERSHIP IN ANY
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MILITARY BLOC.

2. COMMENT: THE NP PROBABLY DECIDED TO ISSUE THIS
DECLARATION IN ORDER TO REFUTE CHARGES BY THE MALTA
LABOR PARTY AND PARTICULARLY THE PRIME MINISTER THAT
THE NP IS NOT UNITED ON ITS FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS.
THE NP ALSO WANTED TO STRESS ONCE AGAIN ITS FUNDAMENTAL

BELIEF THAT MALTA MUST REMAIN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH WESTERN EUROPE WHICH IT BELIEVES, SHOULD MAKE THE NP MORE APPEALING TO THE WEST AND, HOPEFULLY, GENERATE MORE WESTERN SUPPORT FOR THE NP IN GENERAL.

--THE STATEMENT DID NOT COVER THE NP POSITION ON COMMERCIAL ACCESS FOR FOREIGN MILITARY VESSELS TO MALTA'S DRYDOCKS AND OTHER FACILITIES. SENIOR NP LEADERS HAVE STATED IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH US THAT THEY DO NOT RULE OUT SUCH ACCESS TO ANY MILITARY SHIPS INCLUDING THOSE BELONGING TO THE SUPERPOWERS, ALTHOUGH THE SHADOW MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DR. TABONE, HAS SUGGESTED THAT THIS POINT MIGHT BE NEGOTIABLE. THE STATEMENT DID NOT COVER NP VIEWS ON MALTA'S NEED FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE EITHER, BUT THE SAME NP SOURCES HAVE RECONFIRMED THEIR OPINION THAT BECAUSE OF THE POOR MANAGEMENT OF THE MALTESE ECONOMY BY THE LABOR GOVERNMENT, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AT LEAST FOR A FEW YEARS AFTER MARCH, 1979, WILL BE REQUIRED REGARDLESS OF WHICH PARTY IS IN POWER. LAINGEN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, NATIONALISTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, NEUTRALIZATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VALLET00962
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780166-0963
Format: TEL
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780442/aaaabjuk.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 159c8bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2925725
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATIONALIST PARTY VIEWS ON BASIC FOREIGN - POLICY ISSUES
TAGS: PINT, XT, XG, MT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/159c8bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014